

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

HB 1716

Title: An act relating to warm water fish culture.

Brief Description: Authorizing funding for the warm water fish culture project at Ringold.

Sponsors: Representatives G. Chandler, Doumit, Mastin, Mulliken and Grant.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Meeting Date: March 1, 1999.

Bill Analysis Prepared by: Josh Weiss, Counsel (786-7129).

Background: Warm water game fish in Washington include the sunfish, pike, catfish, and perch families. A 1986 survey concluded that more than half of Washington fishing license holders fished for warm water species. The amount of recreation provided by warm water species in 1986 was second only to trout fishing in lowland lakes, and ahead of steelhead and salmon angling.

The warm water game fish enhancement program was created in 1996 within the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. The program was originally funded through a \$5 license surcharge that is required to fish for bass, walleye, channel catfish, tiger musky and crappie. This revenue was to be used exclusively to increase opportunities to fish for warm water game fish and not to be used to replace funding for these programs. In 1998, the Legislature revised the Department of Fish and Wildlife licensing structure, eliminating all surcharges.

Currently, funds equal to 6.512 percent of the total funds received from the sale of freshwater and freshwater, saltwater, and shellfish combination licenses are deposited into the warm water game fish account. This percentage is adjusted annually to reflect the actual number of warm water game fish license holders, which is determined by survey.

Current statute requires that money from the warm water game fish account not be used for the operation or construction of the warm water fish culture project at Ringold. In addition, the statute requires that funds from the sale of the warm water game fish surcharges are to be deposited into the warm water game fish account.

Summary of Bill: Allows an amount from the warm water game fish account not to exceed \$91,000 to be used for warm water fish culture at Ringold, for the current

biennium. Strikes language requiring that funds from the sale of the warm water game fish surcharges be deposited into the warm water game fish account.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 1, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Rulemaking Authority: None.